

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 000416

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/30/2014

TAGS: [PREF](#) [IZ](#) [AF](#) [EUR](#) [EUN](#) [USEU](#) [BRUSSELS](#)

SUBJECT: EC ON IRAQI REFUGEE RETURN AND INTEGRATION

STRATEGY: LESSONS LEARNED FROM AFGHANISTAN

REF: STATE 19360

Classified By: PRMOFF MARC J. MEZNAR. REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1. (SBU) Summary. The EC agrees with reftel strategy of concentrating first on the return of Iraqi refugees from neighboring countries. It has no plans at present to promote the return of Iraqis from EU Member States. An EC attempt to return Afghans to their country in 2003 was unsuccessful because many Afghans feared the conditions in Afghanistan were not adequate to sustain reintegration. The EC would like to participate in the February 15 - 16 meeting in Amman to map out a strategy for the return and reintegration of Iraqi refugees. ECHO is currently funding an NGO to help return Iraqi refugees from Iran. End Summary.

-----  
DG JHA: No Plan to Return Iraqis from EU  
-----

2. (C) On 1/30, PRMOFF met with Christian Klos, DG Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) officer in charge of return policies, to convey reftel points on the proposed refugee return and reintegration strategy for Iraqis. Klos said that the European Commission (EC) had no plans to begin returning Iraqis from EU Member States, primarily because the present safety and security conditions in Iraq did not seem to warrant such. He said internal EU discussions about Iraq remain contentious and that the EC would rather focus its return efforts on a country where there is broad consensus.

3. (SBU) Klos reviewed failed EC efforts to carry out a voluntary return program for Afghans. Based on estimates supplied by IOM, the EC allocated 7 million euros to fund an initiative which was projected to return approximately 5000 Afghans per month beginning in April 2003. These JHA funds from the B7-667 budget line were intended to help the Afghan government improve capacity for handling returns, including the construction of reception centers and transportation inside the country, provide mine awareness training for returnees and also some vocational training and income generating programs. However, very few Afghans were willing to return, possibly because of lack of security in many parts of Afghanistan, particularly outside the capital.

4. (C) Klos welcomed the strategy laid out in reftel and said that the JHA funding could be used for Iraqis, if Member States agreed, along the lines described in paragraph 3 for Afghans. Klos said that the incoming-Dutch Presidency has indicated interest in exploring the possibility of returning Iraqis, but he doubted that the situation on the ground in Iraq would allow for this during the Dutch Presidency (second half of 2004).

-----  
ECHO: Onboard to Further Regional Returns  
-----

5. (SBU) PRMOFF also conveyed reftel points to ECHO Head of Unit Ruth Albuquerque. She agreed with the proposed strategy to facilitate refugee returns from neighboring countries first. Albuquerque expressed interest in the February 15-16 planning meeting in Amman and said she would like her Amman-based officer Paul Filler to attend. To date, ECHO's return efforts have been focused on refugee returns from Iran to southern Iraq via its implementing NGO partner Accion Contre la Faim (ACF).  
MINIMIZE CONSIDERED

SCHNABEL